

WEST LAFAYETTE POLICE MERIT COMMISSION AMENDED MINUTES
July 12, 2010

The West Lafayette Police Merit Commission met in regular session in the Lower Level Conference Room of City Hall on July 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Police Merit Commission President Leverenz called the meeting to order and presided.

PRESENT: Commissioners Corrigan, Leverenz, and Sutor.

ABSENT: Kirkpatrick, Troyer, and Counsel Brooks.

ALSO PRESENT: Police Captain Leroux, Police Sergeant Watson, Councilor Hoggatt, and Dr. James LeBreton, Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences, Purdue University.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Corrigan moved approval of the minutes of the April 12, 2010, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sutor. Commission President Leverenz announced that the minutes were approved as distributed.

OLD BUSINESS

2011 Budget

Commission President Leverenz stated that he had worked with Clerk-Treasurer Rhodes on the Police Merit Commission's 2011 budget. It will be the same as the 2010 budget.

2010 Budgetary Matter

Commission President Leverenz asked Dr. LeBreton to submit his bill as soon as possible, so that it can be paid with 2010 funds.

Promotion Testing, Interviewing, and Comments

► Commission President Leverenz reported that the promotion testing was completed. The feedback from those who took the tests was that the tests were significantly improved over the last exams. Both Captain Leroux and Sergeant Watson confirmed this. Sergeant Watson suggested that there may be some questions that are irrelevant, but they are still good tests. Dr. LeBreton asked that Captains Leroux and Francis review the item bank questions again.

► Commission President Leverenz said that dates for interviews with those who are eligible for promotion could not be scheduled at this meeting, but that their plan is to complete the interviews in August. There are two individuals to be interviewed for Captain positions, five for Lieutenant, and six for Sergeant. He said that he would attempt to schedule these via email.

► Dr. LeBreton mentioned that his technical report that summarizes the whole process is not yet available, but it will be available before the August meeting. One of his graduate students, Jane Wu, who has helped extensively with the development of the tests, will attend the next meeting, as Dr. LeBreton will be unavailable.

► Commission President Leverenz commented that the administration of the Police Department complimented Dr. LeBreton on his hard work and his good understanding of how the tests should be put together. Sergeant Watson added that Dr. LeBreton listened to the officers and used that information to develop the tests. That was very much appreciated by the Department. Captain Leroux echoed that it was apparent that Dr. LeBreton took an interest and cared about a good outcome. He thanked Dr. LeBreton for his efforts.

► Dr. LeBreton mentioned that the subject of future exams needs to be discussed, whether to recycle a common exam for three or four years.

New Applicants

Commission President Leverenz noted that testing was completed last year, and that the Department had been given eight names of candidates on whom to do background checks. Captain Leroux reported that of the initial eight candidates, two responded and completed the process of the background checks. The others either took employment elsewhere or did not respond to various attempts to contact them by telephone calls, certified letters, or responded then failed to appear for their interviews with the Department. Of the two interviews scheduled, one candidate was assigned by the military to officer candidate school, so withdrew from the process. Lieutenant Sparger chaired the interview committee. Captain Leroux provided information about this candidate to the Commission. This candidate is now ready to be interviewed by the Commission. Twelve additional candidates have had background checks, with the Detective Division doing background checks on additional individuals. The hope is to continue to feed names to the Commission for their interviews.

Commission President Leverenz said that the current list would expire August 11. The new list would be created as the Commission interviews candidates.

Commissioner Suitor asked if there were openings. Captain Leroux answered that there are currently two openings, Officer Danny Phillips and Officer Mike Noworyta left when their spouses recently graduated from Purdue. It is likely that only one position will be filled this year. Commission President Leverenz added that Police Chief Dombkowski and Mayor Dennis are in discussion about those positions. These are the first vacancies in two years. Commission President Leverenz said that interviews for the candidates listing would have a higher priority than the officer promotion listing, due to the vacancies.

Commission President Leverenz stated that, as of this morning, there were 821 applicants for positions. Sergeant Watson said that while there are 821 names on a list, some of those could be duplicates and some may not be eligible to be tested; there are 821 inquiries. The Department would like to set October 9 as a testing date, with August 2 as the close for accepting applications. Sergeant Watson reported that last year's test was supposed to be for 300 or 400, but only about 150 were present for testing. He had to order sufficient number of tests for anyone who might potentially be present for testing. The Department is billed on the actual number of tests used; the rest are returned for credit. Sergeant Watson suggested that, in order to plan and prepare, a letter be sent via email, asking applicants to register for testing. He provided a draft of such a letter. Only those who register would be eligible for testing. Additionally, Sergeant Watson asked the Commission to consider charging applicants to take the written tests, to help offset the cost. Last year, the Department paid approximately \$2,000 for written exams. Captain Leroux said that other agencies in Tippecanoe County charge for applicants to take written exams, and it is a common practice in law enforcement. Having to pay for an exam demonstrates another level of commitment from the applicant. They suggest having a \$20 fee. Lafayette and Tippecanoe County charge either \$20 or \$25. Captain Leroux asked if the Commission needed to approve the rate. Commission President Leverenz asked Captain Leroux to check with City Attorney Burns, since Commission Counsel Brooks is out of town. Human Resources Director Foster would send letters to the applicants on August 3 or August 4, a day or two after the closing date. This would give sufficient time to order the exams, schedule an appropriate number of individuals to assist with the tests, and work out other logistical and resource details. There was consensus among the Commissioners that testing on October 9, with a cutoff of August 2 was acceptable. Commission President Leverenz asked for a motion on charging for tests.

Commissioner Corrigan moved that, if the City Attorney agrees, the Department charge a \$25 application fee. Commissioner Sutor seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote. [The attorney subsequently approved the fee.]

NEW BUSINESS

Chief's Report

Captain Leroux distributed the Chief's report for the June 2010.

Presentation

Captain Leroux presented a certificate of appreciation to Commissioner Sutor for her service on the Police Merit Commission. This is her last meeting.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Commission President Leverenz expressed appreciation for Councilor Hoggatt attending the meeting. Commission President Leverenz asked Councilor Hoggatt to assist with the promotion spreadsheet.

Commission President Leverenz thanked Commissioner Sutor for her time commitment to serve the City by her work on the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

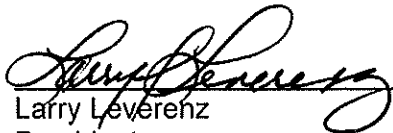
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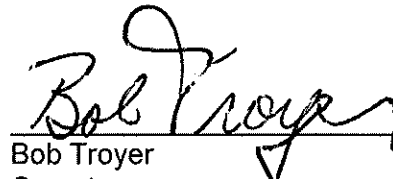
NEXT MEETING

August 9, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Corrigan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sutor. Commission President Leverenz adjourned the meeting, the time being 7:49 p.m.


Larry Leverenz
President


Bob Troyer
Secretary